

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-07 IO-13 CU-02 EB-07
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R 051555Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9428
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 9613

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CH, UR
SUBJECT: SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS: NAVIGATION, TRADE TALKS

REF: MOSCOW 7798

SUMMARY: PRC EMBOFF LI HAS TOLD FOREIGN DIPLOMATS IN MOSCOW
THAT THE CHINESE HAVE PROPOSED THAT THE SINO-SOVIET RIVER
NAVIGATION TALKS BE RESUMED. THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT YET
REPLIED, BUT LI IMPLIED THAT HE EXPECTED THE TALKS TO TAKE
PLACE. ON OTHER QUESTIONS, LI SAID THAT THE BILATERAL
TRADE TALKS, WHICH BEGAN ONE MONTH AGO, WOULD CONCLUDE
SHORTLY AND, AS USUAL, A PRC DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN
TRADE WILL COME TO MOSCOW TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT FOR 1977.
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LI ALSO SAID THAT THE NEW CHINESE AMBASSADOR WILL
PROBABLY ARRIVE IN MOSCOW EARLY IN AUGUST. END SUMMARY.

1. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH JAPANESE EMBOFF
ORITA AND FRENCH EMBASSY COUNSELOR BASANOFF (PROTECT
BOTH) LI FENG-LIN, CHIEF OF PRC EMBASSY EXTERNAL
POLITICAL SECTION, SAID THAT THE CHINESE HAVE PROPOSED

THE RESUMPTION OF THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER RIVER NAVIGATION TALKS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED SINCE 1974. HE TOLD BASANOFF THAT PEKING, AS ALWAYS, IS INTERESTED IN IMPROVING STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS AND POINTED TO THIS PROPOSAL AS AN EXAMPLE OF CHINESE EFFORTS IN RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET GESTURES TO PEKING AFTER MAO'S DEATH. LI ACKNOWLEDGED BASANOFF'S POINT THAT THE SOVIETS SEEMED DISAPPOINTED THAT THEIR GESTURES HAD MET WITH NO POSITIVE CHINESE RESPONSE, BUT HE ADDED THAT THEY HAD NOT MADE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO ADDRESS THE REAL ISSUES. LI TOLD BASANOFF THAT THE SOVIETS HAD NOT RESPONDED TO THE PRC PROPOSAL ON THE NAVIGATION TALKS BUT LAER (JULY 2) IMPLIED TO ORITA THAT THE TALKS WILL OPEN, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SAY WHEN. HE ALSO DID NOT SPECIFY THE AGENDA OF THESE TALKS.

2. LI TOLD ORITA THAT THE SINO-SOVIET TRADE TALKS FOR 1977 WILL SOON BE COMPLETED AND THAT A PRC DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE WILL COME TO MOSCOW FOR A WEEK TO TEN DAYS FOR THE SIGNATURE OF THE NEW AGREEMENT, THE TERMS OF WHICH HE DID NOT DISCUSS. FINALLY, LI TOLD ORITA AND EMBOFF THAT THE NEW CHINESE AMBASSADOR, WANG YU-PING, WILL ARRIVE SHORTLY, PROBABLY IN AUGUST.

3. COMMENT: LI APPEARS TO BE CONVEYING THE MESSAGE
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THAT DESPITE ITS CONTINUED BITTER INVECTIVE AGAINST MOSCOW, PEKING WANTS TO MAINTAIN AT LEAST A MINIMUM LEVEL OF STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS THE SOVIETS HAVE PRIVATELY CLAIMED THAT THE RIVER NAVIGATION TALKS WERE STALLED BECAUSE THE CHINESE HAD RAISED THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE. ALTHOUGH LI DID NOT MENTION THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE TO EITHER OF HIS INTERLOCUTORS, AN AGREEMENT TO MEET (IF INDEED SUCH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED) COULD INDICATE SOME MINIMAL COMPROMISE BY ONE OR BOTH SIDES.

4. LI GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE TRADE TALKS ARE MOVING AHEAD AS EXPECTED, PRESUMABLY ON THE BASIS OF A PRIOR AGREEMENT TO KEEP TRADE AT THE 1976 LEVEL, AS MFA OFFICIAL KIREYEV TOLD EMBOFFS ON JUNE 1 (REF-TEL).
TOON

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